

SUNDAY 23rd March – arrival, by This Correspondent

After a fair, if hot, night's sleep for many, the team arrived in Johannesburg, where baggage was retrieved efficiently, before that of most other passengers, whereupon the team decamped to the area just outside the SA police station, where the opportunity was taken to wait around a bit more while the police decided which couple of rifles to have a peep at.

Next step was to Avis, where more waiting ensued. The good offices of Avis employee and GB wind coach Matt Ensor had secured us five sizeable vehicles all, it seems, in return for a photograph of all the staff with the "famous" Great Britain Rifle Team.

Onto the road we went, for the long drive to Bloemfontein, which was interrupted only by a stop at a roadside Wimpy. Despite many having exited their vans before him, somehow Martin managed (yet again) to make it to the front of queue. He cited the fact that others had apparently needed to use the ATM before buying food among his reasons for having taken pole position, pleading "I don't know what you're all on about!" But we do...

We arrived mid-afternoon at the College Lodge guest house, whose accommodation came as a pleasant surprise. The downsides were that there was no WiFi connection, and no exercise facilities. If you are reading this then we have probably resolved the former.

We all had a couple of hours off before a team meeting slightly after 6pm, at which we learned that Gary Alexander had been promoted to the status of full team member, having contributed very fully as a reserve – congratulations Gary! We also discovered that this tour might have made a good cure for a shopaholic, with the Adjutant telling us in fairly quick succession that we were to spend the following morning reconnoitring the range before having the afternoon off, and that "I've checked and most of the shops are open tomorrow until 1 o'clock"!

Dinner was at a very nearby restaurant whose high quality belied the use of the simple words "Butcher's Grill" in the name. But it was great meat. As one GBRT group of nine ordered, another group of eight appeared. And management had gone off to eat by the Waterfront. Which made twenty. And there should have been twenty-one of us. As This Correspondent tried to locate Marcus by mobile phone, he was simultaneously calling Gary, and within minutes we were re-united.

Probably the closest the team would experience to a late night occurred in the adjacent bar afterwards, with a trio of team members lasting until the heady hour of, ooh, nearly 11... we were here to shoot and to shoot well, after all.